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**THE GEOMETRY OF HOPE: LATIN AMERICAN ABSTRACT ART
FROM THE PATRICIA PHELPS DE CISNEROS COLLECTION
OPENS FEBRUARY 20, 2007**

*Masterworks of modern art from South America on view in
Austin, Texas*

AUSTIN, Texas - The Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin will present ***The Geometry of Hope: Latin American Abstract Art from the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection***, an exhibition from the acclaimed ***Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros (CPPC)***, from **February 20 through April 22, 2007**. Drawn from one of the world's leading collections of Latin American art, this exhibition examines the dynamic visual vocabulary of Geometric Abstraction that developed in the cosmopolitan art capitals of Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and other South American cities from the 1930s through the 1970s. Featuring more than 125 works by over 40 artists, *The Geometry of Hope* is a provocative exploration of the complex history and rich creative ferment of one of the most fascinating artistic movements of the last century.

Organized by the Blanton Museum of Art, ***The Geometry of Hope*** will be among the first major, international exhibitions presented by the new museum, which opened to the public on April 30, 2006. The Blanton has one of the longest held and largest collections of Latin American art in the country and has led the way in scholarship, exhibitions, and research for 35 years. Along with the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection and the Teresa

Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies, the museum has catapulted The University of Texas at Austin to the cutting-edge in Latin American studies.

The exhibition, along with its catalogue and related public programs, including a symposium to be held in spring 2007, is the product of the **Cisneros Graduate Research Seminar at The University of Texas at Austin**, a multi-year collaboration between the CPPC—a program of the Fundación Cisneros—and the Blanton. Generous funding for the exhibition is provided by the Eugene McDermott Foundation. The catalogue is made possible by the support of the Fundación Cisneros.

The exhibition and catalogue will provide the most comprehensive scholarly overview to date of Latin American Geometric Abstraction from the 1930s to the 1970s. In the fall of 2007, a variation of the exhibition will be presented in New York City, in collaboration with New York University's Grey Art Gallery. Project Director is **Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro, Curator of Latin American Art at the Blanton**.

Dr. Pérez-Barreiro states, "The CPPC is unique in the depth and range of Latin American Geometric Abstraction that it contains. Indeed, it is a veritable encyclopedia of all the major artists and movements in Latin America from the 1920s to the present day, and there is no collection like it in the world in public or private hands. ***The Geometry of Hope*** will therefore be not only a major presentation of the CPPC itself, but also a unique opportunity to present the extraordinary complexity of abstract art in Latin America. Moreover, the Cisneros Graduate Research Seminar, with its resulting exhibition and catalogue, is a model of what a university museum can

accomplish. We thank Patricia Phelps de Cisneros and the Fundación Cisneros for their unflagging enthusiasm for and support for this major endeavor. ***The Geometry of Hope*** is testament to the richness and productiveness of the Blanton-Cisneros collaboration."

CPPC founder and Fundación Cisneros Chair **Patricia Phelps de Cisneros** adds, "The Cisneros Graduate Research Seminar at The University of Texas at Austin is benefiting not only seminar participants, who are able to work with original works of art and to engage with important scholars, but also the CPPC and its curators and staff, who are profiting from the new light shed on those works, as well as from the in-depth exploration of various issues associated with modern Latin American art. The Seminar will surely inform the CPPC and its programming far into the future. We are grateful to The University of Texas and the Blanton Museum of Art—with special thanks to Project Director Gabriel Perez-Barreiro—for the scholarship and dedication they bring to this work, and for sharing those with the public through ***The Geometry of Hope*** and its catalogue and accompanying symposia."

Exhibition

Organized chronologically, ***The Geometry of Hope*** will focus on key cities in the development of abstraction in the Americas: Montevideo (1930s), Buenos Aires (1940s), São Paulo (1950s), Rio de Janeiro (1950s-60s), Paris (1960s), and Caracas (1960s-70s).

In tracing the development of ideas from one socio-geographic context to another, the exhibition will challenge the view of Latin American art as a single

phenomenon, revealing important differences and tensions among various artistic proposals articulated during the decades being examined. For example, Joaquín Torres-García's fusion of ancient American art with Neo-Plasticism was roundly rejected by the next generation of ardent Marxists in Argentina. And the rational and internationalist aspirations of the São Paulo concretists of the 1950s were reinterpreted and charged with specific Brazilian references by the neoconcretists in Rio de Janeiro. The exhibition's inclusion of Paris as a "Latin American" city underscores the cosmopolitan and international nature of Latin American abstraction—characteristics that are often ignored in American and European accounts of the history of modern art.

The exhibition will include work by approximately forty artists. Among them are **Joaquín Torres-García**, from Montevideo; **Gyula Kosice** and **Tomás Maldonado**, from Buenos Aires; **Geraldo de Barros** and **Waldemar Cordeiro**, from São Paulo; **Hélio Oiticica** and **Lygia Clark**, from Rio de Janeiro; and **Jesús Rafael Soto** and **Carlos Cruz-Diez**, from Paris and Caracas.

Publication

The Geometry of Hope will be accompanied by a richly illustrated, 300-page, bilingual (English-Spanish) publication, published by the Blanton Museum of Art. This will include an introduction by Dr. Pérez-Barreiro, scholarly essays on each of the cities explored in the exhibition, and extended essays presenting new research on forty individual works of art. This focus on individual objects makes the book unusual among publications on Geometric Abstraction.

In addition to Dr. Pérez-Barreiro, authors include scholar Cecilia de Torres; Erin Aldana, University of Texas doctoral candidate; Paulo Herkenhoff, independent curator; Luis Pérez-Oramas, The Estrellita Brodsky Curator of Latin American Art, The Museum of Modern Art, New York; and Serge Guilbaut, Professor of Art History, Visual Art and Theory, University of British Columbia, as well as thirteen graduate students who are participating in the Cisneros Seminar from The University of Texas, New York University, and other universities.

Symposium and Public Programs

In the spring of 2007, The University of Texas and New York University will present a major symposium on the occasion of the exhibition. This will bring international scholars to Austin to discuss the work on view in ***The Geometry of Hope***. In the fall of 2007, in conjunction with the New York presentation of the exhibition, New York University's Grey Art Gallery will present a series of interdisciplinary programs on varied topics relating to modern and contemporary Latin America art and culture. In addition, both universities will organize diverse exhibition-related events aimed at engaging a broad public.

Cisneros Seminar

The Blanton Museum of Art and the Fundación Cisneros have enjoyed a long and exceptionally fruitful relationship, beginning in 1999 with the establishment of a multifaceted loan and research program. The aim of the Fundación Cisneros-Blanton Museum collaboration—which has included components for students, scholars, and the general public—has been to showcase the work of Latin American

artists in a major U.S. teaching and research museum, and to promote research on modern and contemporary Latin American art. In addition to exhibitions, publications, seminars, scholarly symposia, and public programming, this relationship has yielded the Cisneros Graduate Research Seminar.

Begun in 2005, the Seminar has provided a unique opportunity for academic and curatorial research on crucial theoretical and practical issues associated with the presentation in the United States of abstract art from Latin America. These issues have included previous approaches to modern Latin American art; how approaches to Abstract Expressionism and Minimalism are relevant to Latin American Geometric Abstraction; and issues involved in producing an exhibition catalogue; among others. The many guest-presenters to the Seminar have included CPPC Curator Ariel Jiménez; artist and theorist Luis Camnitzer; Ms. de Torres; Andrea Giunta, professor of art history, University of Buenos Aires; and Dr. Pérez-Oramas, among others.

Blanton Museum of Art

The Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin is one of the foremost university art museums in the country, and has the largest and most comprehensive collection of art in Central Texas. The museum welcomes and engages all visitors by offering personal, extraordinary experiences that connect art and ideas, reaching within and beyond The University of Texas campus to stimulate the thriving, creative community that is Austin, Texas, and beyond. The Blanton's permanent collection of more than 17,000 works is recognized for its European paintings, an

encyclopedic collection of prints and drawings, and modern and contemporary American and Latin American art. The collection of Latin American art is one of the oldest, largest, and most comprehensive in the country, and includes works by many artists not represented in other U.S. collections. The collection is particularly strong in Mexican graphics of the early 20th century, and post-1970 paintings and drawings from South America. Specific concentrations include the School of the South (Joaquín Torres García, Francisco Matto, Julio Alpuy, Gonzalo Fonseca), New Figuration (Luis Felipe Noé, Rómulo Macció, Jorge de la Vega, Antonio Seguí), Political Conceptualism (Luis Camnitzer, Eugenio Dittborn, Gonzalo Diaz, Cildo Meireles), and emerging artists (Jorge Macchi, Yoshua Okon, Diego Gravinese).

Fundación Cisneros/Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros

The **Fundación Cisneros** was founded by Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, Gustavo Cisneros, and Ricardo Cisneros, in association with the Cisneros Group of Companies. The Caracas-based Fundación initiates and supports a wide range of innovative programs, many of which leverage the resources of the Cisneros Group of Companies to reach ever-greater audiences. Fundación Cisneros programs focus on education and culture, and on increasing global awareness of contemporary Latin America. For more information visit www.blantonmuseum.org

The **Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros** is the primary visual-arts program of the Fundación Cisneros, where it is the centerpiece of a constellation of educational and public programming. The Colección focuses on modern and contemporary art from Latin America, and includes as well Latin American

landscapes from the seventeenth century to the present day; Venezuelan colonial art; and the drawings, diaries, and artifacts of French artist-explorer Auguste Morisot. For additional information, visit www.coleccioncisneros.org.

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Press Information

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For the **Fundación Cisneros**, or for additional information about the **Geometry of Hope** exhibition and publication and the Cisneros Graduate Research Seminar, please contact Jeanne Collins & Associates, LLC, New York City, 646-486-7050, or info@jcollinsassociates.com.